

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Flexer and Rep. Blumenthal, Vice-Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Morin-Bello, Ranking Members Sen. Sampson and Rep. Mastrofrancesco, and Distinguished Members of the GAE Committee:

I am a retired lawyer who lived and practiced for many years in New York. In my last job before I retired, I worked in Connecticut and in 2015 moved to Norwalk, where I have lived ever since. I have been particularly impressed here by my easy access to our elected representatives and their remarkable responsiveness to their constituents. They routinely appear at both official and party gatherings, answer questions, respond to letters and e-mails, etc. But in one respect, the State of Connecticut lags behind other states, and that, of course, is in accommodating voters at election time. Voting in person here has been limited to Election Day in November (and on primary voting days), and absentee voting has required an “excuse”. Thanks to the wisdom of Connecticut voters last fall, that will no longer be the case. But how will the legislature implement early voting?

To that end, I am writing to express my strong support for S.B. No. 1064, H.B. No. 5004, S.J. No. 29, and H.J. No. 1. I also conditionally support S.B. No. 1057 and H.B. No. 6693. The voters of Connecticut have decisively voted in favor of the ability to vote in person on days prior to Election Day. It is now up to you to make this happen.

As you deliberate on how exactly to implement early voting, I urge you to enact legislation that does at least the following:

1. Includes at least 14 days of early voting, with at least two weekends (both Saturday and Sunday, to accommodate any religious concerns).
2. Makes early voting available this calendar year for all elections (special, municipal, referenda, etc.).
3. Provides adequate funding to include all eligible voters. Actual locations should accommodate voters who use public transportation and reflect the number of eligible voters in each town.
4. Funds public education about early voting.

I also strongly support no excuse absentee voting. A presidential election three years ago in the middle of a pandemic reminded us how essential it is in a democracy to allow citizens to vote by absentee ballot.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Very truly yours,

Robert P. Blank  
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Norwalk